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NASSAU COUNTY LEGISLATURE

RICHARD NICOLELLO
PRESIDING OFFICER

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

County Executive and Legislative Building
1550 Franklin Avenue
Mineola, New York

Monday, October 4, 2021
1:57 P.M.

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2 A P P E A R A N C E S:

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4 LEGISLATOR RICHARD J. NICOLELLO

5 Presiding Officer

6 9th Legislative District

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8 LEGISLATOR HOWARD KOPEL

9 Deputy Presiding Officer

10 7th Legislative District

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12 LEGISLATOR DENISE FORD

13 Alternate Presiding Officer

14 4th Legislative District

15

16 LEGISLATOR KEVAN ABRAHAMS

17 Minority Leader

18 1st Legislative District

19

20 LEGISLATOR SIELA BYNOE

21 2nd Legislative District

22

23 LEGISLATOR CARRIE SOLAGES

24 3rd Legislative District

25

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2 LEGISLATOR DEBRA MULE

3 5th Legislative District

4

5 LEGISLATOR C. WILLIAM GAYLOR III

6 6th Legislative District

7

8 LEGISLATOR VINCENT T. MUSCARELLA

9 8th Legislative District

10

11 LEGISLATOR ELLEN BIRNBAUM

12 10th Legislative District

13

14 LEGISLATOR DELIA DERIGGI-WHITTON

15 11th Legislative District

16

17 LEGISLATOR JAMES KENNEDY

18 12th Legislative District

19

20 LEGISLATOR THOMAS MCKEVITT

21 13th Legislative District

22

23 LEGISLATOR LAURA SCHAEFER

24 14th Legislative District

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2 LEGISLATOR JOHN FERRETTI, JR.

3 15th Legislative District

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5 LEGISLATOR ANDREW DRUCKER

6 16th Legislative District

7

8 LEGISLATOR ROSE WALKER

9 17th Legislative District

10

11 LEGISLATOR JOSHUA LAFAZAN

12 18th Legislative District

13

14 LEGISLATOR STEVEN RHOADS

15 19th Legislative District

16

17 MICHAEL PULITZER

18 Clerk of the Legislature

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2 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: We're
3 going to go into the full legislature now. I
4 think we're all here. Call this meeting of
5 the legislature to order and ask Mike to read
6 the roll.

7 MR. PULITZER: Thank you
8 Mr. Chairman. Roll call. Deputy Presiding
9 Officer Howard Kopel.

10 LEGISLATOR KOPEL: Here.

11 MR. PULITZER: Alternate Deputy
12 Presiding Denise Ford.

13 LEGISLATOR FORD: Here.

14 MR. PULITZER: Legislator Siela
15 Bynoe.

16 LEGISLATOR BYNOE: Here.

17 MR. PULITZER: Legislator Carrie
18 Solages.

19 LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: Here.

20 MR. PULITZER: Legislator Debra
21 Mule.

22 LEGISLATOR MULE: Here.

23 MR. PULITZER: Legislator C.
24 William Gaylor III.

25 LEGISLATOR GAYLOR: Present.

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2 MR. PULITZER: Legislator Vincent

3 Muscarella.

4 LEGISLATOR MUSCARELLA: Here.

5 MR. PULITZER: Legislator Ellen

6 Birnbaum.

7 LEGISLATOR BIRNBAUM: Here.

8 MR. PULITZER: Legislator Delia

9 DeRiggi-Whitton.

10 LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON:

11 Here.

12 MR. PULITZER: Legislator James

13 Kennedy.

14 LEGISLATOR KENNEDY: Here.

15 MR. PULITZER: Legislator Thomas

16 McKevitt miss.

17 LEGISLATOR MCKEVITT: Here.

18 MR. PULITZER: Legislator John

19 Ferretti.

20 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Here.

21 MR. PULITZER: Legislator Laura

22 Schaefer.

23 LEGISLATOR SCHAEFER: Here.

24 MR. PULITZER: Legislator Arnold

25 Drucker.

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2 LEGISLATOR DRUCKER: Here.

3 MR. PULITZER: Legislator Rose
4 Marie Walker.

5 LEGISLATOR WALKER: Here.

6 MR. PULITZER: Legislator Joshua
7 Lafazan.

8 LEGISLATOR LAFAZAN: Here.

9 MR. PULITZER: Legislator Steven
10 Rhoads.

11 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Present.

12 MR. PULITZER: Minority Leader
13 Kevan Abrahams.

14 LEGISLATOR ABRAHAMS: Here.

15 MR. PULITZER: Presiding Officer
16 Richard Nicolello.

17 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Here.

18 MR. PULITZER: We have a quorum
19 sir.

20 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: First we
21 will handle the procedural agenda. Call
22 Resolution 28-21 as to procedures. It's a
23 resolution as to procedure to amend the rules
24 of procedure for the 13th Nassau County
25 Legislature pursuant to the county government

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2 law of Nassau County.

3 Moved by Legislator

4 DeRiggi-Whitton. Seconded by Legislator

5 Ford. This amends our rules with respect to

6 mailings to provide in the event of an

7 emergency or natural disaster in which an

8 immediate response is necessary that the

9 legislators will have the flexibility to be

10 able to send something out under those extreme

11 circumstances.

12 Any debate or discussion as to this

13 resolution? Hearing none, all in favor

14 signify by saying aye. Those opposed?

15 Carries unanimously.

16 Now, the other item is -- I need a

17 motion to untable ordinance number 86. Motion

18 by Legislator Ford. Seconded by Legislator

19 Birnbaum. All in favor of untabling ordinance

20 number 86 signify by saying aye. Those

21 opposed? It's untabled and back before the

22 legislature.

23 I know that we have Chief Deputy

24 County Executive who is here remotely, but

25 before we do that I want to note for the

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2 record there was public comment submitted by
3 Fredrick Mayfield and we will provide that to
4 the clerk's office so it can be made part of
5 the record.

6 Helena are you there?

7 MS. WILLIAMS: Yes. Thank you
8 Presiding Officer Nicolello and Minority
9 Leader Abrahams for inviting me to participate
10 in today's legislative meeting and of course
11 to support County Executive Curran's Household
12 Assistance Program.

13 Pleased to report to you that the
14 program serves two important purposes.

15 First, it provides direct
16 assistance to households including homeowners
17 and renters.

18 Second, to the extent that we can
19 encourage spending in Nassau County it will
20 boost our local economy. The \$100 million
21 direct assistance program is a large program
22 to administer, there's no question. We are
23 confident in our ability to manage it.

24 I would like to compliment DCE
25 Evelyn Tsimis and Commissioner Steve Morelli

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2 of OEM. Working with Evelyn Tsimis she has an
3 experienced planning team working with her led
4 by Sean Sallie, deputy commissioner at DPW.
5 As you are aware, DPW worked hard throughout
6 our prior federal relief program, the Sandy
7 recovery effort.

8 Also Commissioner Morelli's team at
9 OEM has been terrific in coordinating the
10 retention of three consulting groups to
11 provide assistance with Adora, Haggerty and
12 KPMG we are poised to manage both ARP and HAP
13 effectively and efficiently.

14 Here today we have outside counsel
15 Jacob German. We have in-house counsel Conal
16 Denion and Sean Sallie deputy commissioner.
17 We are very pleased to answer any specific
18 questions you have.

19 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Thank you
20 Helena. The main focus of my question or
21 questions is I think it was basically covered
22 in your statement. That you are confident in
23 the ability of the county to manage this
24 program. I just want to make sure that's
25 clear on the record that the county executive

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2 and the administration has confidence that
3 they will be able to administer this program.
4 Is that accurate?

5 MS. WILLIAMS: Yes. That's
6 correct.

7 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: I don't
8 know if you can answer this or others, is
9 there going to be a telephone number where
10 residents can call with questions?

11 MS. WILLIAMS: We have a
12 communications plan to provide frequently
13 asked questions on our website. We have
14 locations that we're going to direct people
15 to. We have not thought that the best
16 approach would be a call center at this time.
17 We want to see if our outreach and media
18 effort can get people to the locations that we
19 have identified. And our whole communications
20 plan will focus on Eisenhower Park, 40 Main
21 Street, at 60 Charles Lindbergh there will be
22 a kiosk set up right there and at One West
23 Street. We believe that we have a really
24 significant outreach that will allow people to
25 ask questions and navigate the portal.

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2 There is a phone number that will
3 be attached but it's not one where we're
4 providing, you know, call-in assistance.

5 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Where
6 would calls to that phone number go?

7 MS. WILLIAMS: We're working on a
8 Boost Nassau approach. We'll rely primarily
9 on recordings. We don't want to tie up people
10 just answering the phone and we're trying to
11 make sure that we get people to really
12 understand the program. We're going to do
13 some outreach at libraries. We've set up some
14 arrangements to have specific public
15 information sessions at libraries.

16 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: That's
17 does give me concern. I believe there should
18 be a dedicated phone line. What I envision
19 happening here is that when people aren't able
20 to speak to somebody they're going to be
21 calling their legislators' offices. There's
22 nothing wrong with that, but this is an
23 administration program. So we are, by nature,
24 limited in terms of providing people with
25 assistance. I would strongly encourage the

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2 administration to have a dedicated phone line
3 for this and have it live and have, at least
4 from the initial surge, have someone answering
5 the calls.

6 MS. WILLIAMS: We will take that
7 into consideration then if that's your
8 request. We don't want people calling
9 legislative offices only to refer the calls to
10 us. We will see what we can do to get enough
11 resources to answer phone calls and direct
12 people. So, we will put that in place if
13 that's your request and you think that that
14 will be of assistance in our outreach we
15 certainly can do that.

16 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: The
17 concern here is not that they call our
18 offices. The people are going to do that
19 anyway. But the most effective way for people
20 to get their questions answered is to receive
21 that answer directly from the administration,
22 people who are administering the program as
23 opposed to speaking to an assistant or an aid
24 in our office who is then trying to get that
25 information for the person. We will do that.

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2 Eventually I think that is going to be part of
3 the outcome here. But again, the most
4 effective way to handle this is to have calls
5 go directly to the administration.

6 MS. WILLIAMS: We will do that
7 and we want to have effective materials that
8 we can share with the public.

9 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Thank
10 you. Legislator Ford.

11 LEGISLATOR FORD: Good afternoon
12 Deputy County Executive Helena. Thank you
13 very much for being here with us today in
14 regards to this item. Just to follow-up with
15 the presiding officer's questions in regard to
16 the dedicated number. If we're not going to
17 have a dedicated number who would be the
18 liaison that we would be able to work with so
19 when our constituents call us we will be able
20 to speak to somebody directly ourselves
21 without having to go through different
22 departments and different phone calls
23 ourselves trying to find the answers?

24 MS. WILLIAMS: I want to assure
25 you that the presiding officer asked for a

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2 dedicated phone number. We will set one up.
3 But we will arrange for legislators to be able
4 to contact our constituent affairs unit. Katy
5 Horst will set that up with you. If you have
6 specific constituent questions and you want to
7 answer them directly or you want to make a
8 referral to us we will put a system in place
9 for that.

10 LEGISLATOR FORD: I know that
11 currently Dr. Regina Williams is running the
12 Boost Nassau program in regard to our
13 businesses and our not-for-profits to be able
14 to access funding, to be able to get grants.
15 Will there be somebody who will be able to be
16 the same as her who is overseeing this program
17 on behalf of the county?

18 MS. WILLIAMS: We are going to
19 augment Regina Williams' staff. We're going
20 to add people to it. Regina understands the
21 HAP program and she will be ready to
22 administer there as well.

23 LEGISLATOR FORD: So then she
24 will then be taking over the function of also
25 dealing with the \$375 that will be distributed

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2 to the households?

3 MS. WILLIAMS: Yes. We have to
4 increase Regina's staff because we're going to
5 go to additional locations as well.

6 LEGISLATOR FORD: Because
7 currently I believe she has seven, right? And
8 will there be an opportunity, because I know
9 that they work like normal business hours,
10 like say nine a.m. to four p.m., I don't know
11 the exact hours, but will there be
12 opportunities where perhaps they can work
13 after hours so that those who would be seeking
14 to get this 375 if they do work and if they
15 need to meet of if they want to file in person
16 that they would be able to do so without
17 having to give up their day of work?

18 MS. WILLIAMS: We absolutely
19 agree with that. We think our contact is
20 extremely important. People can't use work
21 time to sort of sort through questions. So,
22 yes, there will be hours available, you know,
23 we think after hours and some Saturdays as
24 well.

25 LEGISLATOR FORD: Perfect.

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2 That's good to hear that.

3 You had mentioned that the program
4 will be geared to all homeowners and renters.
5 Are you saying that -- is it still maintaining
6 that if it's a legal apartment and whoever is
7 in the apartment in a house that person would
8 be entitled to file for the 375? Or are you
9 saying that, clarifying, that if there's
10 somebody who is renting a room inside of a
11 house will that person be able to put in for
12 the 375 relief?

13 MS. WILLIAMS: You know, you're
14 asking a very good question. I know that our
15 team has worked closely at that. It's a
16 household program. So, you have to have the
17 evidence that you are the head of household or
18 that your name is on the lease and you're
19 making rental payments or you're the homeowner
20 of record. The goal is it's a household
21 program and we will look to make sure that we
22 don't get duplicates by address.

23 LEGISLATOR FORD: So, then they
24 would determine that it has to be head of
25 household. I guess this is to ensure that

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2 somebody's child doesn't file for the 375?

3 MS. WILLIAMS: Yes. We have a
4 lot of adult children living at home and they
5 may be covered by a tax return, they may not
6 be. But they are not likely to be paying rent
7 or have their name on the deed.

8 LEGISLATOR FORD: If we don't
9 spend like the \$100 million that's been
10 allocated to this program and just say for
11 argument's sake the claims only total like \$50
12 million, do we have to give that money back or
13 can that be repurposed for maybe if we don't
14 want to do just households maybe we can offer
15 to people that don't necessarily live in
16 apartments. They may be renting rooms or they
17 may be staying with relatives but they still
18 have a job and children that maybe they can
19 access some sort of help?

20 MS. WILLIAMS: We can repurpose
21 the funds with the consent of the
22 legislature. We would come back to you with
23 programatic modifications, changes, additions
24 or reallocations and we would ask for approval
25 of the leg. We do have through, believe it or

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2 not, through 2026 to continue this direct
3 assistance program in place. That's the
4 federal guideline now is funding is in place
5 and eligible to be spent through 2026.

6 LEGISLATOR FORD: Thank you very
7 much.

8 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Legislator
9 Rhoads and Legislator Ferretti.

10 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Thank you
11 Presiding Officer, and good afternoon Deputy
12 County Executive Williams. Thank you for
13 being here. A couple of questions.

14 At our last hearing the deadline
15 date of October 18th was provided to us. But
16 you've just indicated that there's actually a
17 2026 deadline by which these funds have to be
18 expended. What was the October 18th
19 deadline?

20 MS. WILLIAMS: I'm going to have
21 to defer to Sean Sallie. I'm not familiar
22 with a reference to October 18th.

23 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Thank you.

24 MS. WILLIAMS: Sean, was there
25 any recollection or perhaps Legislator Rhoads

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2 if you had any contact for how that came up?

3 MR. SALLIE: I do understand the
4 question. Sean Sallie, Deputy Commissioner,
5 Nassau County Department of Public Works.

6 The October 18th deadline was in
7 reference to the first deadline for submitting
8 the list of applicants or of homeowners I
9 should say. The 42,000 senior STAR eligible
10 households. We need to get that file to Chase
11 Bank is doing the check issuance. We need to
12 get that file to Chase by that date for them
13 to be able to submit or to issue those
14 checks.

15 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: To issue
16 those checks by 2026?

17 MR. SALLIE: No. They have a
18 rolling schedule of when we get them the
19 file. There's a time between -- we get them
20 the file and they can actually mail those
21 checks.

22 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: But if I can
23 ask, it's a deadline to get the checks out by
24 when? In other words, the October 18th is
25 when we have to get them the list. The only

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2 deadline I'm aware of is 2026.

3 MR. SALLIE: I did mention at the
4 last meeting the checks that will be
5 automatically mailed to the list of 42,000 odd
6 households that are eligible for senior STAR,
7 senior tax exemption or LID. The earliest
8 those checks can go out is October 18th.
9 That's Chase's schedule. So, between the
10 approval of the appropriation and October 18th
11 the comptroller needs to approve that list and
12 we need to get that list to Chase so that they
13 can mail those checks out. The earliest they
14 can mail those checks out is October 18th.
15 That's their next issuance deadline.

16 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: So that
17 wasn't a deadline that you were speaking
18 about. Because I think that's the impression
19 that we all had. That's actually the time
20 frame, if it was approved today, it's the time
21 frame -- how long it would take them to
22 actually issue the checks?

23 MR. SALLIE: Right. That's the
24 earliest that they can issue those 42,000
25 checks to eligible households.

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2 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: We are
3 correct though that the only deadline that
4 there is is that the money has to be expended
5 by 2026? Obviously we want to get the money
6 out as early as possible but it has to go out
7 by 2026.

8 MR. SALLIE: Yes. As far as
9 spending the ARP funds that's correct, 2026.

10 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Thank you
11 Mr. Sallie, I appreciate that.

12 Deputy County Executive Williams, I
13 know that you mentioned a communications plan
14 and I think you gave some brief illustrations
15 to the presiding officer during his
16 questioning. Can you go into any more detail
17 as far as how outreach is going to be done to
18 the public so that they are aware of the
19 opportunity to apply for these benefits?

20 MS. WILLIAMS: Certainly. We
21 will have a full communication strategy
22 involving our outreach units as well as
23 Minority Affairs, Asian Affairs, Hispanic
24 Affairs. We will have a kiosk at 60 Charles
25 Lindbergh. We will do extensive

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2 communications at libraries and the ability to
3 use our website and push out information about
4 the program. We want to invite everybody to
5 get their questions answered, get their
6 applications in and we think that will be an
7 ongoing process. To the extent that our
8 legislative offices as well get out
9 information to constituents we will provide
10 you with a packet of information to be able to
11 use.

12 We want to be careful about any
13 mailings at this point. We're all in
14 agreement about mailings. But as we get into
15 the balance of November we'll be able to put
16 more information out as well that describes
17 the program for people.

18 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: But it sounds
19 as though it's a rather targeted approach.
20 This is something that theoretically any
21 resident in Nassau County is available, is
22 available to any resident in Nassau County,
23 correct?

24 MS. WILLIAMS: Under \$500,000
25 annual income and, as you know, there's two

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2 categories between 169 and 500 with evidence
3 of economic harm. And then below 169 is
4 considered low and moderate and there's an
5 easier criteria there. To answer your
6 question, under \$500,000 it's available to
7 anybody who's a resident in Nassau County.

8 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: I guess my
9 concern is the fact that the administration's
10 plan is to visit libraries and hold workshops
11 and to use the Office of Minority Affairs, the
12 Office of Asian-American Affairs, the Office
13 of Hispanic Affairs to do targeted outreach.
14 Where is going to be the outreach to the
15 general public?

16 MS. WILLIAMS: Well, we will be
17 communicating via the web and social media to
18 ensure people know what the program -- if the
19 legislature approves the program today and
20 we're able to get the program out we will
21 launch our effort to describe the program and
22 we will do it within the limits of the mailing
23 restrictions.

24 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Is there an
25 actual communications plan now or is this

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2 something that is still in development by the
3 administration?

4 MS. WILLIAMS: No, we have a
5 communications plan. I will say that we want
6 to modify it to make sure that we're
7 announcing events to describe the program as
8 to ensure that we're in compliance with the
9 mailing legislation. But the communications
10 plan is a strong one. We think that, as
11 Deputy Commissioner Sean Sallie just
12 referenced, the seniors that will be terrific
13 word of mouth when we get that out. That's
14 our ability to do that automatically and we
15 think that will generate a very good buzz
16 about the program.

17 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: I'm just
18 concerned about our using word of mouth and
19 social media as a delivery system to get
20 information out to residents. I'm also
21 concerned, to be honest, about what you had
22 mentioned earlier on in your testimony that
23 there is no plan to have a call center for
24 residents to be able to call to ask their
25 questions. There are going to be numerous

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2 questions I'm sure about both how to negotiate
3 the portal as well as issues which we've been
4 asking about essentially since May. Whether
5 the \$375 checks are taxable. How it is that
6 you are determining eligibility. And forcing
7 people to actually visit the location in
8 Eisenhower Park or show up at a library in
9 person at a workshop. Especially since I
10 would anticipate that many of these questions
11 are going to be from seniors that either don't
12 have access to the portal because they don't
13 have access to computers or have difficulty
14 navigating the portal that you're forcing them
15 to physically appear in a COVID environment as
16 opposed to picking up the telephone. Is there
17 a particular reason why the administration is
18 not having a call-in center?

19 MS. WILLIAMS: Let me just
20 clarify. On seniors, we don't think we have a
21 concern on seniors because we do have
22 appropriate data bases on enhanced STAR and
23 limited income seniors.

24 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Not every
25 senior is eligible for that.

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2 MS. WILLIAMS: Not every senior
3 is enhanced STAR but it will certainly cover a
4 first wave of applicants automatically and it
5 will cover that group that might be more
6 specifically in need because of the income
7 factors that are attached to that
8 eligibility.

9 The presiding officer asked about a
10 centralized phone number with some call center
11 capability. We're going to put that in
12 place. I will say that we were concerned that
13 it is difficult to answer phone calls when
14 you're trying to get people on a website. The
15 goal is to get them to the portal. The portal
16 we have looked at it. We've had our
17 consultants go through it. Nancy Stanton's
18 team has done a fabulous job. We're trying to
19 keep it as simple as possible from a
20 technology point of view.

21 We realize there's a real digital
22 divide that can handle the technology and
23 those that can't. But we tried to keep it
24 incredibly easy to manage. We will be
25 prepared to answer questions about how to use

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2 that portal.

3 It was a control factor, I just
4 wanted to add that Legislator Rhoads. We are
5 very focused on everybody using that portal
6 because that's an internal control factor that
7 will allow us to properly review and approve
8 applications.

9 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: I understand
10 the preference is for people to be able to use
11 the portal. But if somebody has questions
12 about, during the course of using the portal,
13 questions about information that has to be
14 inputted, how the portal works, if there's
15 confusion about anything having to do with the
16 portal or if they don't have access to the
17 portal there should be some number for
18 residents to be able to call. I would think
19 that the most efficient way to do that is have
20 that resident call a number and speak to a
21 live person.

22 I know that answering the phone is
23 hard. We've seen that in the Department of
24 Assessment getting somebody to answer the
25 phone is a challenge. Consumer Affairs

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2 getting somebody to answer the phone is a
3 challenge. Even calling the county
4 executive's office getting somebody to answer
5 the phone is a challenge. But it seems as
6 though it's a challenge that we need to work
7 out the solution to because that is the most
8 effective way for people to be able to get
9 information if they have questions.

10 Who are you supposed to ask? You
11 can't shout at the computer. It seems rather
12 counterproductive to say to somebody who's
13 having difficulty navigating the portal you
14 have to physically drive to Eisenhower Park or
15 you have to find and visit one of those
16 library seminars that you're planning on
17 having as opposed to picking up the telephone
18 and getting a person. Wouldn't you agree?

19 MS. WILLIAMS: You heard
20 Presiding Officer Nicoletto. We understand
21 that a call center operation is important to
22 you. We'd like you to approve this
23 legislation so we're in agreement. We'll get
24 a phone center set up.

25 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Obviously you

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2 want us to approve this legislation and we
3 would love to be able to deliver benefits.
4 But the goal of the program is not for people
5 to use the portal. The goal of the program is
6 for people to get benefits. I'm just
7 concerned, even though the administration is
8 saying now that they will take under
9 advisement the idea of setting up a call
10 center, I'm concerned that you will, sort of
11 like assessment, we will give our approval and
12 all of a sudden that sort of falls by the
13 wayside.

14 MS. WILLIAMS: Let's just clarify
15 if I was unclear in any way. I'm not saying I
16 will take it under advisement. I'm saying we
17 will set up a call center.

18 LEGISLATOR FORD: Who's going to
19 staff that call center?

20 MS. WILLIAMS: We'll get that
21 plan in place. We will find our staff. We'll
22 redirect and we will assist to our
23 constituents with answering questions. And
24 we'll monitor how effective it is and we will
25 be able to see is it a good use of our

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2 resources? Are we able to help? But we heard
3 you that you would like a call center and we
4 will get one set up.

5 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: But the same
6 staff that you have right now, at least if
7 you're planning on using to potentially
8 operate a call center is the same staff that
9 you have administering the Boost Nassau grant
10 program and the Boost Nassau loan program.
11 How much of these individuals are supposed to
12 be able to do at the same time and not affect
13 the delivery of services?

14 MS. WILLIAMS: The staff can be
15 funded by ARP money, so we will augment the
16 staff and we will ensure that we get, you
17 know, call center personnel set up, trained
18 and ready to roll.

19 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: What do you
20 think the time frame will be before that will
21 be actually operational? Again, we're trying
22 to deliver money to residents as quickly as
23 possible. That's the stated intention. We've
24 been talking about this plan since May. A
25 very different plan from what's being

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2 introduced to us now but we have been talking
3 about the concept since May. Why have these
4 conversations and why have these plans not
5 already been put into place?

6 MS. WILLIAMS: We think we have
7 very effective plans and we have
8 communications plan. You would like to see
9 something added to it so we are going to add
10 to it.

11 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Okay. But we
12 are talking about staffing. Are we going to
13 have -- is there a plan to have the staffing
14 in place to be able to handle the volume of
15 applications that you're going to be
16 receiving, the volumes of questions that you
17 are certainly going to be receiving once the
18 public is made aware of the availability of
19 this program?

20 MS. WILLIAMS: Yes. We think we
21 will be able to recruit and train staff. We
22 have funds available to do that.

23 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Understood.
24 But what's the time frame? Do we know?

25 MS. WILLIAMS: Well, if you are

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2 moving forward with approval today we'll be
3 launching tomorrow.

4 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Okay. But
5 you don't have the staff in place today to be
6 able to handle that. That's my point. We've
7 been talking about this since May. Why is
8 there no plan to have staff in place? Let's
9 say we give the approval and you want to roll
10 it out tomorrow. That's great. You don't
11 have the staff to be able to handle a roll out
12 tomorrow.

13 MS. WILLIAMS: Let me be clear,
14 we don't have the staff in place for a call
15 center but we have the staff in place for
16 Eisenhower Park, 40 Main Street, DSS and we're
17 going to set up One West Street. We're
18 augmenting the Boost Nassau staff now. We
19 have constituent affairs ready for the library
20 strategy. You've asked us to add one more
21 component we're happy to do that because we
22 want you to approve the plan, and, like you,
23 we'd like to get this money out to the public.

24 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: My
25 understanding is that your Boost Nassau staff

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2 is approximately five people.

3 MS. WILLIAMS: I think we
4 actually have seven and we have Minority
5 Affairs, Asian Affairs, Hispanic Affairs and
6 we're already recruiting, under Regina
7 Williams, to augment Boost Nassau.

8 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: But don't
9 those departments have other activities that
10 they're supposed to be attending to?

11 MS. WILLIAMS: I think that they
12 will be able to incorporate the questions and
13 answers that are needed to support community
14 involvement.

15 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: To be
16 perfectly honest Deputy County Executive
17 Williams, there is still a significant backlog
18 in MWBE applications with the Office of
19 Minority Affairs. They're having difficulty
20 at their current staffing being able to stay
21 current with the work that they already have.
22 Now you have them administering really now
23 three major programs in addition to the duties
24 they're already struggling to accomplish. I
25 don't see how that's an effective strategy

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2 without bringing on additional people.

3 MS. WILLIAMS: We are bringing on
4 additional people, and I believe Andy's there
5 and Andy, our budget director, can speak to
6 budget for staffing increases in the '22
7 budget for both Minority Affairs and our other
8 outreach offices as well. So we agree with
9 you. We have a need to increase some staff
10 resources. We'll do that under our budget and
11 we'll also do that with ARP funds.

12 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Okay. So
13 we'll be doing it with ARP funds. But those
14 ARP funds are supposed to be used to provide
15 benefits to residents. So every dollar that
16 we use in administrative costs is one dollar
17 less that we can use to provide assistance.
18 Is there any plan within the budget not using
19 ARPA funds?

20 MS. WILLIAMS: Yes. The outreach
21 offices that we just discussed.

22 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Okay. In any
23 event, you seem to be confident, the
24 administration seems to be confident that
25 they're going to be able to handle the volume

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2 of applications and questions that you will be
3 receiving the moment that this actually
4 receives final approval once residents are
5 made aware of the availability of these
6 benefits?

7 MS. WILLIAMS: That's correct.

8 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: When we start
9 getting the phone calls because people can't
10 get through or people don't understand the
11 system the solution from the administration is
12 that we're supposed to contact constituent
13 affairs?

14 MS. WILLIAMS: Let's work
15 separately. Katy Horst will help set up a
16 system for our legislators who get questions
17 from constituents to be able to either answer
18 directly or refer them to us for a quick
19 answer.

20 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: So, you're
21 going to work on that. I'm a little concerned
22 that we've known these issues are going to
23 come up since May and we're talking about
24 potential solutions to those problem now. So,
25 please, if you could, try and come up with

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2 some sort of plan for us sooner rather than
3 later.

4 My next question is with respect to
5 security. One of the issues that we raised
6 was the fact that by virtue -- somebody's
7 microphone is open. If you're not answering
8 questions if you could just mute we would
9 appreciate it. Thank you.

10 You're going to be receiving
11 essentially income tax information from every
12 applicant to the program with the exception of
13 the 40,000 seniors that are part of the
14 enhanced STAR program where they've already
15 pre-enrolled in the county receiving their tax
16 information for eligibility for enhanced
17 STAR. Which means, in theory, you could be
18 receiving 300,000 tax returns. What's the
19 administration's plan for limiting the amount
20 of people who will have access to that
21 information and keeping that information
22 secure?

23 MS. WILLIAMS: We have worked
24 with Nancy Stanton to make sure that we are
25 confident in the security aspects of the

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2 portal and we've retained KPMG to do the
3 review. Sean, can you just describe KPMG's
4 approach?

5 MR. SALLIE: Certainly. So, as
6 the chief deputy mentioned, KPMG has been
7 brought on board to essentially review the
8 applications. They will be reviewing the
9 applications within the portal that's being
10 established. The application is submitted
11 through the portal but the reviews are done
12 within the portal and the approvals are done
13 within the portal.

14 KPMG will have access through a VPN
15 connection. So it will not be over the
16 internet. It will not be done via email.
17 They will have a direct tunnel into the
18 portal. They are very familiar with doing
19 that. We linked their IT folks up with our IT
20 folks. They spoke a lot of jargon that I
21 wouldn't even be able to understand and repeat
22 at this point. But they have been working to
23 develop a mass VPN connection.

24 As for the comptroller, who will
25 need to review the approvals, they will also

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2 be connected through the county's network into
3 the portal. So it will not be done via
4 email. It will not be done over the exigent
5 if you will web.

6 So, with KPMG's experience and
7 their comfort level in dealing with this type
8 of information and keeping it secure, which
9 includes their -- or the security measures are
10 something that they've worked on numerous
11 projects in this capacity. We understand and
12 we feel comfortable that their controls are
13 sufficient to ensure that this information is
14 kept secure.

15 Again, the information resides and
16 remains in the portal. It will not leave the
17 portal in accordance with the control
18 processes that we've set in place.

19 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: So KPMG is
20 going to be supervising the portal and access
21 or is it our IT department that's doing that?

22 MR. SALLIE: Our IT department it
23 will be maintaining the portal. They will be
24 on call if there's an issue. They can patch
25 in and troubleshoot. KPMG will be responsible

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2 for the intake and the review.

3 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Who will be
4 watching over the comptroller's office, for
5 example, as far as which employees have access
6 and ensure that the information that's
7 contained in the portal is not taken outside
8 of the portal for another purpose?

9 MR. SALLIE: We can have that
10 conversation with the comptroller in terms of
11 who from their audit staff, their review
12 staff, will have access and whether or not
13 there's a separate document that needs to be
14 executed to ensure that the information for an
15 additional control so that information stays
16 within the portal.

17 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: In theory, if
18 this gets passed today you're rolling this
19 program out tomorrow. So shouldn't those
20 conversations have already taken place?

21 MR. SALLIE: Well, yes but again,
22 the portal will be opened up to receive
23 applications first. We'll have a day or two
24 to figure out, in working with our
25 comptroller, what, if any, additional security

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2 measures are needed we will be able to work
3 through that. My understanding is, and I
4 can't speak for the comptroller, they deal
5 with sensitive information in their
6 day-to-day. So I think this would not be a
7 new concern for them.

8 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: These are
9 questions -- I'm asking the questions but I've
10 already been asked these questions by
11 constituents who have heard about the fact
12 that they're going to wind up having to submit
13 their tax returns in order for us to determine
14 their eligibility now that's there an income
15 threshold related to this. You're going to
16 receive a lot of those questions as well. We
17 really need to have answers.

18 Because people's confidence -- I
19 know that I would be hesitant in light of some
20 of the issues that we've had. I mean, the
21 best example I can draw is with respect to
22 assessment. Today we discovered that, and
23 this isn't your department, today we
24 discovered that 16,000 errors with respect to
25 16,000 properties that had been corrected on

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2 last year's roll as a result of those being
3 uncovered those mistakes were duplicated now
4 in the rolls that just went out. Which
5 potentially would have a \$50 million impact on
6 the bottom line if those mistakes aren't fixed
7 in our phase-in.

8 I know I would have a crisis of
9 confidence turning over -- I mean I already do
10 because we have financial disclosure -- but if
11 I'm a resident I would have concerns about
12 turning over my sensitive information, my tax
13 return which is going to have name, address,
14 social security number, information with which
15 if it goes into the wrong hands a lot of
16 damage can be done, turning that over in the
17 hope of receiving a \$375 check which may or
18 may not be taxable. We're going to have to
19 answer those questions.

20 Are we in a position to be able to
21 answer it or are those conversations that are
22 going to happen in the next day or two?

23 MR. SALLIE: I appreciate the
24 concern. I fully understand it. And I don't
25 want to understate the fact that the county

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2 departments that already deal with sensitive
3 information know how to keep that information
4 secure. I think from one program to another
5 yes, there are some nuances and differences of
6 course. But I'm confident that the
7 departments that are involved in this effort
8 have the wherewithal to maintain those
9 controls and keep that information sensitive.

10 Again, I respect and understand
11 your point and that the residents of the
12 county are, in applying, they want some peace
13 of mind that this information will be kept
14 secured for \$375.

15 So, I can say that in my
16 understanding of the county controls and the
17 departments that are working with us they feel
18 comfortable that this information will remain
19 secure and this money will be issued with
20 security as the prime measure.

21 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: My concern is
22 that you got to sell that to the public. That
23 there are people who will be aware of the
24 program and will not apply, despite being
25 eligible for it, simply because they don't

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2 believe that we're going to do our jobs in
3 keeping that information secure. That's
4 something that we need to button up the
5 answers to those questions and have actual,
6 substantive information to be able to provide
7 to residents when they contact us with them
8 and we try and find somebody to answer their
9 questions.

10 MS. WILLIAMS: If I may
11 Legislator Rhoads? I think you are
12 articulating an extremely important point
13 about the program parameters. There are
14 clearly going to be people at a higher income
15 levels that don't want to share their income
16 tax information. And that goes back to
17 Legislator Ford who asked can the program be
18 amended and modified as we go forward if, in
19 fact, we're not spending or we don't project
20 that we're go to spend the whole \$100
21 million. And I think those are the kinds of
22 considerations that we will be reporting back
23 to you on.

24 I will say that we anticipate, of
25 course, that there will be a new comptroller,

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2 whoever that new comptroller is, we assure you
3 that we will work with them so that they
4 understand the concern regarding security
5 issues. And as new staff comes on they get
6 the appropriate ethics training to ensure
7 there isn't any improper disclosure of
8 information that would certainly concern
9 people's privacy and privacy questions on
10 income.

11 So, we understand there's some
12 programatic issues for a new comptroller but
13 we are very confident that the office will be
14 well maintained in terms of security whoever
15 the comptroller is.

16 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: So, we are
17 confident and the county executive is
18 confident that we can keep the information,
19 the sensitive information the taxpayers, the
20 residents submit to us in the form of tax
21 returns and their applications, we can keep
22 that information secure? The county executive
23 is confident of that?

24 MS. WILLIAMS: Yes. We are
25 confident that we have those systems in

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2 place.

3 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: And that
4 those systems will work?

5 MS. WILLIAMS: Yes.

6 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Since we were
7 talking about eligibility and I will try to
8 wrap this up because I know there are other
9 legislators that have questions.

10 You know finance rules, DC
11 Williams, require that Nassau County consider
12 whether and to the extent to which households
13 experienced a negative economic impact from
14 the pandemic and requires the cash transfers
15 be, quote, reasonably proportional to the
16 negative economic impact they are intended to
17 address. You're familiar obviously that
18 that's in the guidelines, right?

19 MS. WILLIAMS: Yes. Absolutely.

20 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Under the
21 plan that the administration has put forward,
22 an unemployed single mom who has four kids
23 will get \$375 as a result of the program. A
24 married couple with no kids making \$170,000,
25 \$168,000, who never missed a single day of

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2 work and got every paycheck will be getting
3 the same \$375. How does that relief in those
4 two situations reasonably proportional to the
5 negative economic impact that it intends to
6 address?

7 MS. WILLIAMS: I think that we
8 tried to design a program that would have sort
9 of basic parameters for simplification in
10 administration. We're not going to be looking
11 at individual sliding scale income
12 information, number of dependents, level of
13 hardship below \$169,000. And again, that is
14 to keep the program one that could reasonably
15 be administered by county government in an
16 expeditious, effective and efficient manner.

17 Us looking at sliding scale
18 approach and weighing various own economies
19 and economic impact is not something that we
20 would have an expertise in. So, this is just
21 a flat program of \$375 direct assistance if
22 you're under 169. If you're over 169 you have
23 to show economic harm and the portal
24 identifies what would qualify.

25 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: But my

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2 concern, DC Williams, is that I know that
3 creating a program the way it's been created
4 the county is looking to create a program
5 that's the easiest way for the county to be
6 able to administer. But in looking at the
7 guidance which says that the cash transfers
8 have to be reasonably proportional to the
9 negative economic impact, we provided an
10 illustration where if they're receiving the
11 same benefit, a single mother with four kids
12 is getting the same money -- that's
13 unemployed -- is getting the same money as
14 somebody who earned \$168,000 and didn't have
15 any economic impact.

16 Is doing what's easiest for the
17 county in compliance with the guidance that's
18 issued by the federal government, has anybody
19 actually asked that question of the federal
20 government -- which, incidentally, is a
21 question we've been asking since May and
22 haven't gotten an answer to -- and is the
23 county executive confident that it actually
24 complies or are we going to have a situation
25 where the federal government at some point in

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2 time is going to turn around and say yeah, you
3 know what? the \$100 million that you spent on
4 this program wasn't in compliance with
5 guidelines and we want the money back?

6 MS. WILLIAMS: We are absolutely
7 confident that we have set up the program
8 under the appropriate guidelines. I would say
9 to you that while you are parsing through the
10 safe harbor area of below 169 the guidelines
11 don't require us to do that. Jacob German is
12 outside counsel. He is on the phone as well.
13 We can have him speak to this if you'd like.

14 But I think the issue is where is
15 there a safe harbor under the interim rules.
16 And the safe harbor for giving a benefit and
17 making sure that the benefit itself isn't an
18 extraordinary benefit under ARP was sort of
19 like the first level of analysis that we had
20 to make. So, 375 is a reasonable amount and
21 it applies to everybody in the low to moderate
22 income category.

23 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: I understand
24 that it applies to everyone in the low and
25 moderate --

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2 MS. WILLIAMS: That is not the
3 same for about 169.

4 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: I understand
5 that it applies to everyone in the low and
6 moderate income category and I do have one
7 additional question with respect to AMI and
8 how it was calculated. And I know that we
9 have counsel on the line. And it's great we
10 went to outside counsel to get an opinion.
11 However, was there a reason that we did not
12 ask the treasury department? Clue them in as
13 to what our plan was and ask them whether it
14 would be consistent with the interim final
15 rule that they've issued?

16 MS. WILLIAMS: We got a lot of
17 direction from various contacts we made
18 including Senator Schumer's office that
19 treasury did not want to answer specific
20 questions about specific programs and that
21 they wanted to discuss in their interim rule
22 programatic guidelines.

23 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: So, even
24 though the administration is saying that it's
25 confident, we're relying upon the opinion

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2 that's being given to us by outside counsel
3 essentially to reach the conclusion that it is
4 consistent with the interim rule? Is that
5 essentially what you're saying?

6 MS. WILLIAMS: We had the county
7 attorney's office as well and lots of
8 attorneys, even those who are practicing law
9 like myself, spent a lot of time reading the
10 rules to make sure that we were fitting our
11 program within those parameters. So, we have
12 outside counsel, we have the county attorney's
13 office and we have a lot of good legal
14 thinking that went into this and believe that
15 the 375 is an absolutely safe amount for this
16 county legislature to approve.

17 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: We know that
18 375 may be a safe amount but the question is
19 specifically with regard to the income
20 threshold and the actual circumstances of the
21 individual recipient and whether the relief is
22 reasonably proportional to the harm.

23 So, I understand that we have
24 counsel on the line. If I can ask Mr. German,
25 if you're still there, how do we reconcile the

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2 interim final rule saying that the cash
3 transfer must be reasonably proportional to
4 the negative economic impact with the
5 hypothetical scenario that I provided of
6 having an unemployed single mom of four kids
7 having no income getting the same \$375 that a
8 couple who didn't miss a day of work that's
9 making \$168,000 getting the same \$375?

10 MR. GERMAN: Thank you for the
11 question. That is an area that we looked into
12 and examined in that scenario. The concern
13 though about the size of the payment relative
14 to that person's economic impact is an
15 absolute sense. Not necessarily as compared
16 to the negative economic impact of others. I
17 have a colleague on the phone, on the meeting
18 as well, that has reviewed this in greater
19 detail. Matt, I'm going to turn to you to
20 provide some more context on that example.

21 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: I'm trying to
22 follow the bouncing ball on this one.

23 MR. GERMAN: I apologize. His
24 name is Matthew Morgan, he's a colleague of
25 mine in our federal relations group

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2 specializing in administrative rules.

3 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Mr. Morgan,
4 how are you?

5 MR. MORGAN: Just confirming that
6 you can hear me.

7 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: I can.

8 MR. MORGAN: As to the exact
9 question presented, and we can get to the
10 other follow-up questions for sure, but to the
11 exact question presented it was to your
12 questions to the direct impact. Under the
13 rule, the rule specifically says that you, as
14 the county, may consider and take guidance
15 from the per person amounts previously
16 provided by the federal government in response
17 to the COVID-19 crisis.

18 What this allowance does under the
19 rule -- for example, the federal government
20 this year sent \$1,400 stimulus checks to
21 everyone who qualified regardless of the
22 scenario that you discussed. The federal
23 government did not distinguish between how
24 hard various populations were hit so long as
25 they were within the eligibility criteria.

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2 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: You're
3 talking about the emergency capital investment
4 program?

5 MR. MORGAN: No. I'm talking
6 about the stimulus checks that the US
7 government sent to all citizens.

8 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Okay. I
9 understand. Please continue.

10 MR. MORGAN: The program, the
11 Assistance to Households Program or the
12 criteria inside of the interim rule
13 specifically allows you to model, as the
14 federal government did, in essence you can
15 choose an eligible population and send them
16 all the same amount of checks. Whether that's
17 prudent or not is a decision for the county
18 itself based on who it wants to benefit under
19 the rules of the program. But the decision to
20 send the \$375 checks to everyone within the
21 allowable population is directly allowed under
22 the interim final rule.

23 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Except the
24 economic impact program gave doubled the funds
25 to married couples and even more money to

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2 couples if they had kids. So it did take
3 individual circumstances into account,
4 whereas, our program doesn't.

5 MR. MORGAN: You're referring to
6 the economic impact program that we referenced
7 in our letter my sense is. Let me question
8 this. You're asking whether the economic
9 impact program that we referenced in our
10 letter establishing either 120 percent or 130
11 percent of AMI, am I correct about that?

12 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: No. That's a
13 separate question that I have, but you're
14 referencing specifically the ARP income
15 payments that would provide payments of up to
16 \$1,400 for individuals or \$2,800 for married
17 couples, plus an additional \$1,400 for every
18 dependent. Plus the income thresholds in that
19 program were completely different from the
20 income thresholds that we have here.

21 It was \$75,000 for single and
22 married persons filing separate returns. Up
23 to \$112,500 for heads of household. So it
24 seems as they the program that you're drawing
25 a comparison to for the purposes of justifying

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2 this one has substantial differences which do
3 take into account individual family
4 circumstances and actually do so at a much
5 lower threshold.

6 MR. MORGAN: Yes, but we still
7 view that as a question of prudential decision
8 making or policy decision making of the county
9 itself or the federal government. The rule
10 itself we believe allows that you may set per
11 person amounts based on the distributions.
12 You can set the criteria how you want. You're
13 provided that flexibility under the law. If
14 you choose to strike those income levels
15 you're allowed to do that. But the federal
16 government has also allowed you to set this on
17 a per person basis so long as the cash
18 transfers are not grossly in excess of the
19 amount needed to address the negative economic
20 impact.

21 Our sense of the matter is that the
22 \$375 per person, even at the highest levels,
23 would not be grossly in excess of the
24 amounts -- I mean it would be -- I think your
25 constituents all would say we would love even

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2 more money, right? So that becomes the policy
3 decision making.

4 But to say whether or not it's
5 legally within the allowable limits of the
6 program to provide per person distributions of
7 an equal amount based on a defined population,
8 in this case the 130 percent of AMI, to us
9 that is acceptably within the bounds of the
10 interim final rule.

11 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: But except
12 that we're kind of changing gears a little
13 bit. The emergent capital investment program
14 was designed specifically to target low and
15 underserved communities. So the 120 percent
16 AMI calculation that they made was
17 specifically with respect to low income and
18 underserved communities. The 130 AMI
19 calculation that we're using, which you're
20 saying is a parallel, was based upon the
21 entire county's population. If we targeted
22 the program simply to low income and
23 underserved communities that AMI calculation
24 would be vastly different than what you're
25 getting now, wouldn't it? How are those two

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2 things consistent?

3 MR. MORGAN: It would be or it
4 could be but again --

5 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: More than
6 could be. It would be.

7 MR. MORGAN: The question for us
8 though is, is it allowable under the interim
9 final rule. It seems to me that your question
10 is could we do it another way? Absolutely.
11 Is this program as proposed allowable under
12 the rule because you've taken into account the
13 negative economic impact on the population at
14 issue for the program that it would be an
15 acceptable program.

16 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: The end
17 result of these questions is, look, if we
18 implement the program as it's drafted and it
19 turns out that the federal government makes a
20 determination that our program is not
21 consistent with the rules who takes it on the
22 chin for that?

23 MR. MORGAN: Yes, that would be
24 the county would. But that would be if the
25 cash transfers are decided to be grossly in

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2 excess of the amount needed to address the
3 economic impact.

4 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: But we're
5 relying upon your advice and counsel and are
6 you confident and is your firm confident that
7 that won't happen?

8 MR. MORGAN: We are confident in
9 the program we've reviewed as it's written on
10 paper right now that it is within the
11 acceptable bounds of the interim final rule.

12 I totally understand the county's
13 frustration with the Department of Treasury
14 insofar as that the Department of Treasury,
15 for better or worse, or to be uncharitable for
16 worse, has decided that they are not going to
17 provide individual assurance letters to any
18 local unit of government in this country as to
19 the acceptability of their program.

20 So, therein, the risk, to your
21 question, is who's bearing the risk? Yes, the
22 risk is on the county as to its decision
23 making as to how to distribute the funds.

24 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: I was going
25 to say which may be the reason why there are

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2 so few municipalities who are actually making
3 these direct payments, correct?

4 MR. MORGAN: It could be yes,
5 that the calculation of risk is to not be the
6 first mover. That is a possible explanation
7 for the slow delivery of funds.

8 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: But the
9 county executive is asking us to roll the dice
10 and it's your, I want to say concerted but
11 that's not the right word, it's your
12 considered legal opinion that based upon what
13 you've read about the program as it's been
14 proposed that that would fall within those
15 guidelines?

16 MR. MORGAN: Yes.

17 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Last
18 question. Taxability. You've given an
19 opinion that the \$375 payment would not be
20 taxable for the purposes of federal income
21 tax. Newsday reported, which is a local paper
22 to us, I understand you're in Illinois?

23 MR. GERMAN: Indiana.

24 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Newsday,
25 which is our local paper, reported having

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2 spoken to someone at the administration who
3 gave a different opinion, that it would be
4 taxable. I know that in the report that you
5 wrote that we're not supposed to -- we're
6 supposed to rely upon your opinion that it's
7 not taxable but residents shouldn't rely upon
8 that opinion themselves. Is there a reason
9 for that?

10 Because when this program gets
11 rolled out and I'm asked whether it's taxable
12 or not we're going to say that we received an
13 opinion from Barnes and Thornberg that it's
14 not taxable. Is there a reason why we
15 shouldn't do that?

16 MR. GERMAN: I'd be curious for
17 one to see that if you've received any
18 information on that side, I'd be curious to
19 see that information. But from our
20 perspective, the payments like these are not a
21 taxable event.

22 The qualifier that you've noticed
23 in the letter as far as Barnes and Thornberg
24 not providing legal advice to all taxpayers
25 within Nassau County, the reason that there's

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2 a qualifier in there is because the individual
3 taxpayers could be subject to individual rules
4 based on other federal programs that they are
5 subjected to.

6 So, that's sort of what we're
7 trying to bifurcate in the letter that this
8 payment not being taxable but the implication
9 on income, for instance, could have impacts on
10 other federal programs that the taxpayers
11 individually in Nassau County are subject to.

12 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: So, at the
13 end of the day if a constituent were to call
14 me and ask me if this was taxable income and I
15 would say that we received an outside opinion
16 from Barnes and Thornberg that it would not
17 be, that would be problematic, right? Because
18 they may have individual circumstances which
19 may make it taxable?

20 MR. GERMAN: They would have
21 individual circumstances where this income
22 could have taxable consequences for other
23 federal programs that they are subject to.

24 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: We can say
25 that we received an outside opinion from

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2 Barnes and Thornberg saying that it would not
3 be taxable. However, you should check with
4 your own tax professional as to how it applies
5 to you?

6 MR. GERMAN: Exactly. Yes. 100
7 percent.

8 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: I appreciate
9 it. I will yield Mr. Presiding Officer. I
10 know other legislators have questions.

11 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Legislator
12 Ferretti then Legislator Walker.

13 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Thank you
14 Presiding Officer. Chief Deputy Williams are
15 you still with us?

16 MS. WILLIAMS: Yes, I am.

17 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: How are you
18 doing? You spoke earlier about the outreach
19 plan. You spoke about some meetings that
20 you're planning on having at libraries. Do
21 you have a list specifically of what libraries
22 you're planning on having those meetings at?

23 MS. WILLIAMS: No but we can
24 provide that to you.

25 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: So that's

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2 already been planned out which libraries?

3 MS. WILLIAMS: We had outreached
4 to the libraries. We've identified some that
5 were willing to offer space and we are in an
6 ongoing process and discussion with the
7 libraries. If there's one that you would
8 specifically would like us to reach out to
9 we'd be happy to do that.

10 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Who's
11 actually going to be running those meetings?

12 MS. WILLIAMS: Who's going to be
13 running the outreach? Communication staff.

14 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: So
15 constituent affairs?

16 MS. WILLIAMS: And
17 communications. They will have experts
18 from -- they will also have staff from Regina
19 Williams and the outreach offices. We're
20 trying to ensure that we provide some
21 bilingual support for the program as well.

22 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: I know a
23 lot of libraries are still not having in
24 person gatherings of more than like five
25 people. I know in my district, for example,

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2 none of them are. Will you be looking into
3 alternative locations if libraries are not
4 having those meetings?

5 MS. WILLIAMS: We can, certainly.

6 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: But I know
7 you already have a plan in place and you
8 brought up libraries and apparently there's
9 been some outreach to the libraries already.
10 I can tell you that the outreach in my
11 district could not have yielded a scheduled
12 meeting because they're not having any
13 meetings.

14 I heard a lot about Minority
15 Affairs and you just spoke about bilingual.
16 That's great. We should be using those
17 resources to get the word out. But I think
18 Legislator Rhoads brought out the general
19 public that may not have access to those
20 agencies. I certainly would hope that they're
21 going to get as much outreach. Is there going
22 to be at least one location in every
23 legislative district that's going to have one
24 of these meetings?

25 MS. WILLIAMS: I have not

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2 assessed that yet. But if you want to make a
3 recommendation for a location within your
4 district and we will reach out to other
5 legislators regarding their districts we'd be
6 happy to do that. Even for the grievance
7 program we generally use the library
8 locations. We have some other locations on
9 occasion. But we will be using a widespread
10 communications plan to try to get this word
11 out.

12 And of course, part of our goal is
13 to encourage spending in Nassau County. So we
14 will be using the chambers, for example.
15 Apply here for 375 and come and shop in our
16 downtown locations. Have a dinner out. Get a
17 haircut.

18 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: The whole
19 reason that we even need to have a
20 communications plan, one as thorough as I
21 think we are trying to make sure we have, is
22 because the administration's initial plan is
23 not coming to fruition, right? The initial
24 plan was that anyone who received basic STAR
25 would automatically get one of these checks,

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2 right?

3 MS. WILLIAMS: That had been one
4 of our early parameters that we were looking
5 at. But we made it clear we were seeking
6 advice for the program parameters.

7 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Sure. That
8 was made clear at one of our hearings. It
9 wasn't made clear at the press event that was
10 held announcing that every resident making
11 under \$500,000 would receive this. Of course
12 that was a promised that now is not going to
13 be kept. But had it been, there would be no
14 need for any outreach or information in terms
15 of how to apply because there would be
16 application process under that initial plan,
17 right?

18 MS. WILLIAMS: Well, I can't
19 really speak to what the parameters were of a
20 plan that didn't mature. We're at a plan and
21 a point now where we have a mature plan.
22 We're asking for your support. We've expanded
23 the plan to include more households by
24 including homeowners and renters. So we're
25 trying to do a balanced program that provides

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2 direct assistance which is allowable under
3 ARP.

4 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Let me ask
5 you a follow up to what you just said. I know
6 you just said that you expanded the program to
7 include more households, right?

8 MS. WILLIAMS: Yes.

9 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: But I think
10 what you really mean is you expanded the
11 program to include more types of households
12 whether it be renters or homeowners. Because
13 the reality is that less checks are going to
14 be sent out under this plan than under the
15 initial plan, right?

16 MS. WILLIAMS: But our goal is to
17 ensure that we provide the legislature with a
18 plan that we are confident meets the federal
19 guidelines and that's what we've done. We've
20 presented you with a plan that we're confident
21 meets the federal guidelines.

22 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: But the
23 initial plan would have sent out checks to
24 every household with an income under \$500,000
25 that receives STAR and we were told that would

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2 add up to \$100 million. Now, the new plan we
3 may vote on today the eligibility would still
4 be up to \$500,000 but between 168 and 500 you
5 need to show harm, correct?

6 MS. WILLIAMS: That is correct.

7 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: And I think
8 you'd agree with me that not every single
9 Nassau home has experienced harm as a result
10 of COVID, right?

11 MS. WILLIAMS: I'm confident that
12 that's correct.

13 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: So you
14 would agree with me then that the universe of
15 households who may receive a check has
16 decreased, right?

17 MS. WILLIAMS: I believe that
18 that is correct because we are trying to
19 ensure that we are 100 percent confident that
20 we fit the parameters of the federal program.
21 That we modified the program as we went
22 forward to expand it and not rely on the STAR
23 database.

24 I can't really speak to what your
25 understanding was of the initial program. I

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2 thought we were pretty clear that we needed to
3 seek treasury guidance. At that time we were
4 very hopeful that treasury would actually make
5 specific recommendations about specific
6 programs. And as you heard from outside
7 counsel they declined to do that.

8 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: But my
9 point is and it's not the first time I've
10 heard it from members of the administration
11 that this new plan expands the amount of
12 people that -- amount of households that can
13 receive a check. It's just not true. The
14 amount of checks --

15 MS. WILLIAMS: That are eligible.

16 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Right.
17 There will be less eligible households, as we
18 just agreed upon, under this new plan than the
19 plan that was initially broadcast to the news
20 back in May.

21 MS. WILLIAMS: Again, I can't
22 speak to what your understanding was of that
23 program. We always wanted a program that met
24 federal guidelines. I think everyone wants a
25 program that meets federal guidelines.

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2 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: What is
3 your understanding -- would you agree with the
4 statement that the initial plan encompassed
5 every household that received basic STAR?

6 MS. WILLIAMS: Our first goal was
7 to try to ascertain whether we could get a
8 higher income level approved by the federal
9 government. But they have declined to move
10 their standards and they are very strict in
11 terms of what they would respond to.

12 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: I
13 understand. I'm not looking to beat a dead
14 horse but I think we can agree that the first
15 program would include every household that
16 received basic STAR. I think we agreed on
17 that already. I think it's also not really a
18 controversial statement to say that this
19 program in front of us today will not result
20 in checks going to every household that
21 receives basic STAR. Therefore, it seems
22 pretty obvious that less checks will go out
23 under this program than the initial program
24 that was promised to Nassau residents. But I
25 will move on.

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2 Mr. Sallie, maybe you can answer
3 this. Sorry, I took some notes down as
4 Legislator Rhoads was speaking. They're kind
5 of jumbled and out of order. Thank you Chief
6 Deputy, I might have a question for you in a
7 few minutes.

8 MR. SALLIE: Legislator, I can
9 actually speak to the question you just posed
10 regarding the number of potential awardees or
11 recipients comparing the prior plan to the
12 current.

13 I'm looking at a table of
14 households in Nassau County. I have one table
15 that breaks out ownership households and one
16 table that breaks out renter households. As
17 many of you are aware, about 80 percent of the
18 households in Nassau are owners. About 20
19 percent are rental. There are about 360,000
20 ownership households in Nassau. About 86,000
21 rentership households. I'm looking at this
22 chart, it's breaking it out by those
23 households by income. If we assume that --
24 and it breaks out income in 5,000 increments.
25 This is all from the US census.

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2 Outside of the presumption, so 169
3 up, for owner households there are about
4 155,000 households that are outside of the
5 presumption. For rental households there are
6 about 76,000 households that are outside the
7 presumption. Those households, in terms of
8 income, they go well beyond the 500 as well.
9 The census just does not break down those
10 higher income households so we don't know
11 exactly what that breakout look likes.

12 However, if for the ownership
13 households, which I said are about 155,000
14 above the presumption, about half of the
15 households are in the rentership category
16 above those income. So if you get less than
17 half of the 155,000 in the ownership
18 households and almost all of the renter
19 households, which is about 76,000, you could
20 have a scenario, and I'm saying there are
21 multiple scenarios that could play out, but
22 one of the scenarios is in fact where you have
23 more checks going out under the proposed
24 program compared to the prior program.

25 I just wanted to put that on the

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2 record because, again, there are a couple of
3 scenarios that could play out but there is in
4 fact a scenario here where we could be issuing
5 more checks under the current versus the prior
6 program.

7 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Alright.

8 So you spoke kind of a fast and I didn't write
9 all of the numbers down. I understand the
10 scenario from what you're saying where there
11 could be because you're including another type
12 of household, a rental household. So, for
13 example, theoretically, if every Nassau
14 property owner with a household income between
15 169 and 500 all experienced COVID harm and all
16 applied yes, then you would have a scenario
17 where more checks would go out because the
18 initial program didn't include renters. I got
19 it.

20 I find it hard to believe that
21 we're to have that many households or every
22 household -- we'll see. I appreciate your
23 point that it is theoretically possible that
24 more checks go out under this program. I
25 think it's unlikely. I guess we'll find out

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2 if this passes today. But thank you for that
3 explanation.

4 Speaking on to that, I know
5 Legislator Ford brought this up earlier. One
6 of the scenarios I'm sure you have is that
7 less checks going out than what was originally
8 anticipated, correct? That is a possible
9 scenario?

10 MR. SALLIE: It is in terms of
11 income.

12 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Assume that
13 that happens and \$100 million is not used.
14 That money can be allocated to other COVID
15 relief, correct?

16 MS. WILLIAMS: Sean, I'll just
17 jump in here. It can be reallocated under ARP
18 meeting those guidelines and we would come
19 back to the legislature for the correct
20 appropriation.

21 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Is there
22 going to be a deadline for residents or
23 homeowners or renters to apply for this 375?

24 MS. WILLIAMS: The program can
25 continue through 2026.

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2 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Right. But
3 if we're going to reallocate whatever funds
4 are not used, if any, we would obviously need
5 time to do that. So, is it anticipated now
6 and maybe the answer is we've got five years
7 to worry about it but.

8 MS. WILLIAMS: Not that I want to
9 take words out of your mouth, but yes, we do
10 have time to look at the progress of the
11 program, to make estimates on how the program
12 has been utilized and what the funding might
13 be that could be reallocated.

14 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: So, as of
15 now there's no deadline other than 2026?

16 MS. WILLIAMS: Correct.

17 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Maybe this
18 is a question for Mr. Sallie. Sorry to make
19 you get up and down. But Ms. Williams if you
20 want to answer that's fine. I want to make
21 sure I understand before we take this vote.
22 If you have a young resident, you know, your
23 son or daughter, 21 years old, living in your
24 house and they file tax returns. They make
25 whatever, \$30,000, and they submit their tax

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2 return through the portal and the parents make
3 300K each. So the household income is over
4 \$500,000. They're not eligible. But the
5 single filer submitted their tax return
6 through the portal at an annual salary well
7 below the amount. What is the safeguard in
8 place to not send a check to that household?

9 MR. SALLIE: Chief deputy I'm
10 happy to answer.

11 MS. WILLIAMS: Sean, go ahead
12 because we've been working on these program
13 controls.

14 MR. SALLIE: In that scenario or
15 any in scenario the applicants are required to
16 provide a proof of head of the housing unit.
17 So, a mortgage statement, a homeowner's
18 insurance statement, a lease with the
19 applicant's name on the lease, insurance I
20 think I mentioned or utility bill with that
21 person's name on the utility bill.

22 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Can I stop
23 you one second? When you say "in that
24 scenario" in the scenario I presented only one
25 tax return is going into the portal. How does

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2 the county know that anyone even lives there?

3 Are they cross-referencing with a deed?

4 MR. SALLIE: No. If that address
5 has already received a check the portal will
6 know and that address will be essentially
7 stricken from future consideration.

8 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI:
9 Understood. But that address should never
10 have received a check at all, right? It's
11 household income.

12 MR. SALLIE: But the way we're
13 determining household income is the head of
14 the household unit submitting his or her tax
15 return. One tax return per housing unit. Or
16 unless you are married filing separately then
17 it's both.

18 So, if the working son or daughter,
19 21, 22 years old, is the first person to
20 submit in the portal that person will also
21 need to include, in addition to his or her
22 1040, proof of head of the housing unit.
23 Again, a lease, a mortgage statement,
24 homeowner's insurance in that person's name.
25 So, if the son or daughter does not have that

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2 information that application will be not
3 approved.

4 If the son or daughter talks to his
5 or her parent and says our household is still
6 eligible, please apply, the parent should be
7 able to provide that head of the housing unit.

8 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: In my
9 scenario when the son or daughter uploads the
10 tax return what indication is there on the tax
11 return that would trigger the county saying
12 hey, you need to get us a lease? It's the way
13 that they file?

14 MR. SALLIE: Right. So, we won't
15 know if it's the son or daughter. The portal
16 itself, the first page is what you need to
17 submit as part of the application. So when
18 you upload, you're going through the
19 application, you're uploading your 1040.
20 There's also a place on the portal where
21 you'll need to upload a copy of those
22 documents.

23 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: I guess I'm
24 still not getting it. I don't understand.

25 MS. WILLIAMS: I'm going to jump

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2 in because I think I'm getting your question
3 Legislator Ferretti and I just want to make
4 sure we navigate this correctly. I think
5 you're asking how will we know that that's an
6 individual that resides with his parents
7 because the parents haven't applied?
8 Individuals will have a home address on their
9 tax return and we will be able to determine
10 whether that's a home that is in his name or
11 her name or it's someone else's name.

12 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: How? Do
13 you cross-reference with the deed?

14 MS. WILLIAMS: We will be able to
15 cross-reference with information they have to
16 provide in the portal to show that they are
17 the head of the household.

18 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Okay.

19 MS. WILLIAMS: Sean, we have a
20 list of the things that individuals have to
21 use to demonstrate that they're head of
22 household.

23 MR. SALLIE: Exactly. Mortgage
24 statement, a lease, homeowner's insurance,
25 utility bill etcetera.

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2 MS. WILLIAMS: So the son or
3 daughter will not be able to provide mom or
4 dad's mortgage, utility statement etcetera.

5 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: So,
6 basically anyone who does not file as head of
7 household if they're filing individually will
8 have to provide this additional information?

9 MS. WILLIAMS: Exactly. It's all
10 in the drop down menu and those are the items
11 that Sean was referring to have to be uploaded
12 before the application can be approved.

13 MR. SALLIE: Legislator, any
14 applicant will need to file those documents in
15 addition to the 1040.

16 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: There's no
17 one who is just going to submit a tax return,
18 everyone is submitting additional
19 information?

20 MR. SALLIE: That's correct. We
21 need to verify the residential unit, the
22 address and the head of the housing unit
23 status.

24 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: This is
25 going to be done by the vendor or by county

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2 employees?

3 MR. SALLIE: This will be done by
4 the vendor. The review will be done by the
5 vendor.

6 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: We're also
7 going to give access to a lease agreement in
8 the case of an upload of a lease, correct?

9 MR. SALLIE: If that's what
10 they're uploading.

11 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: What are
12 some of the other things that can qualify as
13 additional information?

14 MR. SALLIE: Mortgage statement,
15 a lease, homeowner's insurance, utility bill,
16 water, electric, gas.

17 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Look, this
18 is a lot to ask of residents to put their
19 trust in our database. Is that the word for
20 it? I have the utmost respect for Nancy
21 Stanton and her team. I've worked with Nancy
22 for a long time. She's great at what she
23 does. But we can't ignore the fact that last
24 year we had a ton of errors with the
25 assessment information. And although we

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2 called them errors, what we were told by the
3 administration was they were computer
4 glitches. That was the term that was used by
5 the administration, glitches in the computer
6 system. I might not agree with that. I think
7 it was more errors. But that's what they told
8 us. Clearly there were glitches in that
9 system.

10 Then you look at the comptroller's
11 office, which I believe is one of the offices
12 that's going to have access to this
13 information, correct?

14 MR. SALLIE: They will need to
15 approve.

16 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: And there's
17 been breaches, as we all know, in that
18 system. And what we're asking residents to do
19 is to upload information into a cloud or
20 whatever you want to call it with their social
21 security number, their children's social
22 security numbers on this information into the
23 system. I think that expecting residents to
24 do this if we're anticipating it's going to be
25 a large amount I don't see it.

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2 MR. SALLIE: Just a point of
3 clarity. We're not asking for children's
4 social security numbers.

5 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: That's on
6 my tax return. I get a deduction for my two
7 children. So if I upload my tax return I'm
8 uploaded my social security number, which, by
9 the way, I'm not doing, it will be their
10 social security numbers, my social security
11 number. Are we telling me to redact that?

12 MR. SALLIE: We did talk about
13 that at the last meeting and internally we're
14 talking about being able to redact all
15 information from that form that is not
16 necessary for the HAP program. That's being
17 considered. We don't need any additional
18 information that is not necessary to prove
19 eligibility.

20 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: If this is
21 going to be voted on today, me, personally,
22 especially in light of the vast majority of my
23 constituents being hammered by the
24 reassessment, I can't not vote in favor of
25 something that's going to provide any amount

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2 of relief to my constituents. So, I'm going
3 to reluctantly, if this comes to a vote today,
4 vote in favor. But I see this as a recipe for
5 disaster. I think that there's a lot of risk
6 here, whether it be risk of personal
7 information going out to a computer database
8 that I have not been convinced is adequately
9 secure or whether this money can be clawed
10 back by the federal government which I'm not
11 convinced it can't.

12 But my residents need this money.
13 They've been hammered with the reassessment.
14 But at the same time, I would strongly
15 encourage chief deputy and county executive to
16 get behind our recurring relief to residents
17 in our over \$100 million in fee cuts for
18 unconstitutional and illegal fees. So, I just
19 want to put that out there before the vote. I
20 thank all of you for your thorough responses
21 to the questions. Thank you.

22 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Legislator
23 Walker.

24 LEGISLATOR WALKER: Thank you and
25 I hope I'm not repeating what was already

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2 said. I guess this is for our chief deputy
3 county executive. I know you said that we do
4 have a communication plan. I just know in
5 many events we've had, even different
6 workshops out there, many people had no clue
7 they were taking place. And I would ask some
8 of them how they found out and they said well,
9 I just happen to hear something on News 12 or
10 whatever. So that is a major concern for me.

11 Also a major concern that we have
12 many homebound people. Many in my district.
13 I don't know how they're going to get this
14 information. They're not going go to
15 libraries. I still have many people in my
16 district that have really not left their house
17 since a year ago March. They are still
18 frightened and especially with the different
19 variants out they're very, very cautious and I
20 don't know how they're going to get that
21 information. They're not going to go to
22 Eisenhower Park or West Street.

23 Again, many of my libraries in my
24 district don't have full accessibility to the
25 library yet. How are we going to address

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2 those homebound residents?

3 MS. WILLIAMS: We will have to
4 rely on a good network of assistance. You
5 know, most of our homebound individuals do
6 interact with services. They interact of
7 course with their relatives. We can work with
8 you, Legislator Walker, if you have any
9 particular individuals in your district that
10 you're particularly concerned about.

11 We did do a very good job on our
12 homebound program with vaccinations. So we
13 have some sense of who that population is. We
14 can take a special look at the homebound at
15 your request.

16 I do think a lot of our homebounds,
17 and I don't know want to just generalize, but
18 they may fall into the senior category that
19 may be automatically eligible. That would be
20 our first cut at being able to respond and
21 ensure that seniors do get assistance and in
22 particular homebound seniors.

23 LEGISLATOR WALKER: I know I do
24 have many seniors that are just, I mean, under
25 normal circumstances would not necessarily be

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2 homebound but they still are because of their
3 situation or they have an elderly parent that
4 they take care of and they're just concerned.
5 They're afraid still to go out.

6 I also have many, many residents
7 that don't have access to computers. I still
8 have a large, older population. They're
9 retired. They would fall into the category
10 not to get an automatic check. Many of them
11 are not on, you know, don't get a senior
12 exemption or they're not in enhanced STAR
13 because they get their pensions or whatever.
14 But they're just not computer literate. They
15 didn't need it in their lives before and don't
16 really care to have it now or they'll tell you
17 they're too old to learn. They would then
18 have to go someplace to either go to one of
19 our sites to hopefully get or bring their
20 paperwork. Is that what they would have to
21 do?

22 MS. WILLIAMS: I will say like I
23 do think we have a very good network of
24 relatives. Many of those seniors that you're
25 referring to, and we all have seniors in our

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2 neighborhoods that we have helped all through
3 the pandemic, making sure that they had, you
4 know, access and food resources and
5 transportation, giving rides. We are going to
6 rely on a good word of mouth strategy where
7 relatives, who maybe younger, their own
8 children, adult children are helping mom, dad,
9 aunt or uncle to be able to apply for this.

10 So, I think that we're going to
11 have greater success in reaching those seniors
12 than you might imagine right now. The first
13 cut is enhanced STAR. We will be able after
14 the mailing period where we have a bar to be
15 able to reach more homeowners after that
16 period of time. I know you, as a legislator,
17 will be contacting, reach out, apply now. So
18 I'm confident that there are more ways of
19 achieving this with assistance from relatives.

20 LEGISLATOR WALKER: I hope you're
21 right in that. I just know when it came time
22 even for COVID vaccines I could not tell you
23 how many residents called because literally
24 they felt that they don't have anyone to help
25 them. So, I hope we don't face that. I hope

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2 that everybody is able to or is eligible will
3 be able to.

4 I do have a big question about
5 renters. I know you said this program did
6 include renters. Many, many homes in my
7 community, in my district they're legal
8 rentals but they're rentals and perhaps two
9 families renting a home. They certainly are
10 not the head of household. They have a
11 landlord, whatever. They perhaps do have a
12 lease. Now, how is that going to work if say
13 that was myself, my family and Legislator
14 Schaefer's family? So, if I happen to go
15 first and I have my lease and I send all that
16 information in and you get mine, than
17 Legislator Schaefer's family is just out of
18 luck because now that home already had someone
19 go through the portal and fill out all their
20 paperwork or show you everything, but
21 Legislator Schaefer's family could meet all
22 those requirements too but since we're both in
23 the same home what if the landlord in that
24 house decided he was going to apply?

25 MS. WILLIAMS: There's no

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2 question that we have some families and towns
3 may say it's a code violation, that they're
4 not supposed to be multiple families. But I
5 respect your observation that it clearly does
6 happen. We have designed a program though
7 that it is based on evidence of head of
8 household. So somewhere there's a lease, a
9 utility bill, a water bill, that's going to
10 have the primary name for that household on
11 the lease. And right now our program is
12 designed to just provide for the 375 to those
13 individuals.

14 But I hear you that you are
15 concerned about where there are multiple
16 families perhaps facing housing difficulties
17 and they're all in one location.

18 LEGISLATOR WALKER: Right. What
19 you're saying to me then is basically all of
20 those renters just don't qualify?

21 MS. WILLIAMS: Again, we have to
22 design program guidelines that we can control,
23 that we can audit, that we can ensure we have
24 reasonable documentation to show why we
25 provided the payment we provided.

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2 So, yes, I hear you that there may
3 be more than one unit of families. Right now
4 our program is designed to issue a check to
5 who does have the proper evidence to support
6 the payment. We've got to have a paper trail
7 that we can audit.

8 LEGISLATOR WALKER: I do
9 understand that but when the information goes
10 out that renters qualify, well, a lot of
11 renters don't.

12 MS. WILLIAMS: But we think the
13 majority do and the majority will have
14 documentation and they are in legal residences
15 and they'll be able to show a lease or utility
16 payment.

17 LEGISLATOR WALKER: I don't
18 necessarily agree with that but that's what
19 the program is. So, those residents if they
20 reach out we'll just have to let them know
21 you'll have to reach out to the county
22 executive's office because unfortunately you
23 don't apply. You don't qualify. I mean, I
24 could just tell you in my district that's a
25 large number.

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2 MS. WILLIAMS: Is that a Town of
3 Oyster Bay code issue?

4 LEGISLATOR WALKER: I'm sure it's
5 a code issue in many of our towns. But,
6 unfortunately, for many people that's what
7 they're doing now. Even like you have a
8 senior who might be alone and the only way
9 they can afford to remain in their house or
10 even for their family to feel like oh, there's
11 an extra family in the home with them, they
12 rent part of the home. Otherwise, I guess
13 they feel they couldn't afford to stay here
14 any longer. I do think that's a large number
15 of people. I can't speak for every legislator
16 here but certainly that's a big part of my
17 district.

18 And, you know, I mean, when they
19 become like boarding homes and people get very
20 upset with them, but many of those homes are
21 throughout the districts. And unfortunately,
22 none of these renters will qualify because
23 they are not the homeowners. They're not the
24 head of household. They might have a lease,
25 they might have utility bills, they might have

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2 things that would prove their qualifications
3 but they're not the head of the household.
4 Someone else owns that home.

5 MS. WILLIAMS: Again, I just want
6 to clarify, if you have the evidence of a
7 lease then you do qualify.

8 LEGISLATOR WALKER: That's what I
9 said before. But if I have a lease and
10 Legislator Schaefer's family had a lease,
11 we're living in home A and I sent mine in
12 first, Legislator Schaefer, although she has a
13 lease for her family, isn't going to get it
14 because the home already got one.

15 MS. WILLIAMS: I'm just not sure
16 we would see two legal authorized leases for a
17 single premises. I can't go there in terms of
18 speculation but most landlords have to be very
19 careful because they only issue one lease for
20 a premise.

21 LEGISLATOR WALKER: I don't
22 know. I just know that's a very big scenario
23 in my district and I think that's a scenario
24 in many of the other legislative districts.
25 Those are my main questions. I hope it works

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2 out how we see it but that's a big concern for
3 me.

4 MS. WILLIAMS: Thank you
5 legislator.

6 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Are there
7 any other questions? Thank you Helena, Sean.

8 MS. WILLIAMS: Thank you.

9 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: So, we've
10 had a full debate and discussion. Any public
11 comment? Before we vote I want to say a few
12 words. Whoever wants to say anything fine.

13 I'm going to vote for this. We are
14 putting some monies back into the pockets of
15 residents. Particularly those with a limited
16 income and those who have been economically
17 harmed by this pandemic. I wanted to note
18 that this process, this legislation was
19 initially filed and they sought to have us
20 approve it by emergency. But by us doing our
21 dual diligence and having these multiple
22 hearings and asking our questions we have
23 established the following.

24 That the confidentiality of the tax
25 returns will be protected. They will not be

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2 subject to FOIL. The county is hiring a
3 vendor to administer this process that has
4 provided to us a full project plan. The
5 county will be providing on-site locations for
6 assistance for people who may not be able to
7 navigate the portal and developing a full
8 outreach plan. And today the county has
9 indicated, through the chief deputy county
10 executive, that there will be a dedicated line
11 for people who want to call as well as a call
12 center.

13 Most of all, we've got a
14 representation from the county, county
15 administration that they are confident in the
16 ability to manage this program. So, I will be
17 voting yes.

18 LEGISLATOR FORD: I too support
19 this initiative. And, first of all, Sean, I
20 do want to say thank you very much for heading
21 this up and putting your heart and soul into
22 this. You did a fine job.

23 As I said, there is a merit to this
24 program distribution but I do believe we fall
25 short in reaching out to all who I believe are

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2 entitled to this money. While we give to a
3 household, we are denying those who have low
4 income jobs and suffered greatly during the
5 pandemic and are being left out as they cannot
6 afford an apartment. Especially single
7 mothers with children because they are not
8 living in a two family. They may be renting a
9 room.

10 Yes, there are many households that
11 can use this, especially as the holidays are
12 approaching. I think it is good in that
13 sense.

14 But I do hope we do not wait until
15 2026 before we redirect any unspent funds but
16 watch out and hopefully redirect this to other
17 projects and other recipients such as county
18 employees who did work during the pandemic
19 putting themselves at risk. But with this I
20 will vote yes.

21 LEGISLATOR KOPEL: Okay. Thank
22 you. I too support the idea of helping people
23 who were hurt by COVID and that's what the
24 recent avalanche of federal money was intended
25 to do. However, I cannot support this

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2 program. And I'm not going to go into a lot
3 of questions. I did not participate in the
4 questioning. I think that's been fairly well
5 beaten to death both here today as well as in
6 the earlier committee meetings I asked
7 questions and my colleagues asked many, many
8 questions.

9 What it looks like to me and how it
10 comes out is that the program is not well
11 designed and not really targeted at helping
12 COVID victims. I believe that it's been well
13 established that many, many people who will be
14 getting money were not necessarily hurt by
15 COVID. I believe that the converse is true as
16 well. That many people who were hurt by COVID
17 will not be reached and will not get these
18 funds.

19 Given that, I believe that the
20 funds should be used in such a fashion. This
21 is a once perhaps in a lifetime opportunity.
22 We're getting a lot of money. \$200 million
23 this year, \$200 million next year. We need to
24 do things that help the county in terms of the
25 immediate situation to be sure. But we also

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2 need to -- we have a responsibility to do
3 things that will benefit our county, our
4 residents, our taxpayers in the long run. The
5 funds here can be used for other purposes.

6 It's been established that we are
7 allowed to use the funds for other purposes.
8 Not every purpose. Not any purpose. But an
9 earlier tranche of federal money was used in
10 that way by the administration for salaries
11 because we were told that's what needed to be
12 done at that point.

13 There are county needs such as
14 drainage projects. There are many drainage
15 projects that need doing. These funds are
16 properly used for something like that and they
17 would benefit our residents in the long term.

18 Moreover, if we use these funds in
19 that way we don't have to borrow money for
20 that. But that will provide long term,
21 lasting tax relief for our residents and I
22 think that's more important than just for a
23 check right now. I think it's our
24 responsibility to do more. With that, I do
25 not support this program. Thank you.

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2 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Yes.

3 LEGISLATOR ABRAHAMS: Just real
4 quick. I don't have a very long speech or
5 anything like that. But I just wanted to say
6 that obviously, as I said before, our side is
7 prepared to vote in the affirmative for this
8 plan for multiple different reasons. And I
9 hear and understand some of the concerns that
10 Legislator Kopel has described. I truly
11 believe that to all different, various degrees
12 I think all Nassau County residents have
13 endured some level of impact from COVID. From
14 losing a loved one to multiple other different
15 things. Losing a job or losing a job for a
16 period of time that could be COVID related.

17 Especially, if you think back, the
18 earlier days when restaurants and businesses
19 were closed a lot of people lost income and a
20 lot of people weren't able to regain that
21 income.

22 But since we have come out of that
23 darkness we have been able to see people get
24 their jobs back and come back. That has a
25 ripple effect. It just doesn't impact the

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2 person that lost their job. It could impact
3 somebody that they know. Maybe somebody they
4 helped out during period of time.

5 Look, the way I look at it is, I've
6 said this before, Nassau County or Long Island
7 is a region. New York, quite frankly. We pay
8 some of the highest federal taxes in the
9 country and we see very little return in
10 regard to that money being restored or coming
11 back from Washington to us. And if there's an
12 opportunity for us as Nassau County residents
13 to be able to have an opportunity to get \$375
14 I think that's money well earned, that, quite
15 frankly, Nassau County residents deserve and
16 they earned it already.

17 And I'm happy to see this
18 proposal. I want to congratulate county
19 executive for having the foresight to be able
20 to do this. And Sean and Conal and the county
21 executive and deputy county executive as well,
22 Helena Williams, I want to thank them for
23 having the foresight to be able to put Nassau
24 County residents first.

25 I do want to ask just a quick

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2 question. I know we passed the mass mailing,
3 some of the limitations on the mass mailings.
4 If I wanted to do a mailer on this at some
5 point to educate -- obviously I couldn't do it
6 before the election within the 45 days -- but
7 if we wanted to do something I think it would
8 be beneficial to our residents that if each of
9 us as the 19 legislative body did try to do
10 some type of a mailer to explain what
11 residents are going to start to see in the
12 upcoming weeks, maybe we wait until after
13 November 2nd, I don't want to be accused of
14 doing anything for political advantage.

15 But Sean, is there some type of way
16 we can work with the administration so that we
17 can put together maybe some type of fact sheet
18 or let people know exactly what they're going
19 to be expecting? I think that might be a good
20 idea to do. To be able to try to do that. We
21 won't do it before November 2nd but we'll
22 definitely do something. But thank you
23 again.

24 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Legislator
25 Schaefer, Rhoads and Walker.

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2 LEGISLATOR SCHAEFER: Thank you.

3 I just have a brief statement myself.

4 Mr. Denion and Mr. Sallie thank you. I think
5 you did a great job with what you are
6 presented with.

7 I agree to some extent with what
8 Legislator Kopel has said in that I really
9 wish this had been a little bit more of a
10 targeted program. I know there are people
11 that really will benefit from this that did
12 suffer. But there are many people that are
13 not going to benefit from it because of the
14 kind of blanket approach that has been taken.

15 I will be voting in favor of it but
16 I just really thought that something that was
17 a little bit more thought out with regard to
18 yes, certain people getting it that
19 demonstrate need or seniors, people that
20 really did financially suffer from this. And,
21 for example, what the minority leader was just
22 saying. People that were left out of
23 restaurant business. People that were no
24 longer employed. They were getting some
25 unemployment, which is good, from the federal

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2 government but at the same time some of those
3 people may be renting apartments and they're
4 not going to be able to access this money as
5 well.

6 So, there is pros and cons to this
7 definitely in my opinion. Again, I know some
8 people who really need it will get this
9 funding. So, I am going to vote in favor of
10 it but I just wish it had been parsed out a
11 little bit better. Thank you.

12 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Legislator
13 Rhoads then Legislator Walker.

14 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Thank you. I
15 certainly agree with Legislator Schaefer. The
16 reality is the county executive could have
17 done this a year ago. We had CARES Act money
18 that was available that could have gone to
19 small businesses. One in six small businesses
20 in Nassau County closed during the pandemic
21 and never to return. Many more than one in
22 six actually closed their doors at least for
23 the three months during the shutdown as a
24 result of Governor Cuomo's executive order.
25 That money could have been used to help them

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2 through that difficult time.

3 There were residents that couldn't
4 pay rent. There were residents that couldn't
5 pay their mortgages. There are people that
6 lost their jobs with those jobs never to
7 return.

8 It could have used for job
9 retraining. Instead \$98 million of the CARES
10 Act money was used to pay salaries and
11 benefits so that we could have a budget
12 surplus in an election year. It's disgraceful
13 in my opinion.

14 The urgency that the county
15 executive has expressed with respect to this
16 plan is sabotaged by the fact that there was
17 no urgency behind getting relief to residents
18 a year ago when she had the opportunity to do
19 so and chose to keep that money essentially
20 for herself and her budget.

21 So, I don't want to stand in the
22 way of getting money out to residents. I
23 certainly concur that this could have been
24 better targeted to provide more relief to
25 residents who actually did suffer an economic

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2 impact as a result of COVID. Unfortunately, I
3 think it's too little too late in many of
4 those instances.

5 And I'm also disappointed. I mean,
6 we were presented with an idea back in May.
7 We were never presented with a plan. The only
8 reason that there is any kind of semblance of
9 a plan is because we started asking questions
10 in May. Many of those questions we still
11 don't have the answers to, but the limited
12 answers that we have are only because over the
13 course of the last three months, four months
14 we've continued to ask those questions.

15 And I think that what we've now
16 been presented with -- somebody's mic is
17 open. I think what we've been presented with
18 will deliver some much needed economic benefit
19 to people who were impacted by COVID. But I
20 think this plan is rife with a tremendous
21 number of problems that we've received only
22 hopes and promises that they're going to be
23 able to work their way through as opposed to
24 an actual plan.

25 I think there are security concerns

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2 about turning over sensitive information. Tax
3 returns, social security numbers. I think
4 that there are a large number of residents
5 that are never even going to apply for it even
6 though they would potentially be eligible to
7 receive it because of those security
8 concerns.

9 I don't think there's a plan on the
10 part of the administration to actually be able
11 to get information out to residents. I don't
12 think there's a plan on the part of the
13 administration to actually have a
14 user-friendly way for people to be able to
15 interact with whomever is administering this
16 so that they can get their applications in in
17 a timely fashion.

18 And when you're talking about
19 having to analyze 300,000, theoretically, tax
20 returns, applications, do deed searches, look
21 at bills to determine whether or not somebody
22 is an actual homeowner or a primary head of
23 household, that is a massive undertaking that
24 we have demonstrated in a whole host of ways,
25 not the least of which is this reassessment,

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2 that we just don't have the capacity to do.

3 And we can try and sort of put a
4 Band Aid over it by trying to go outside and
5 have somebody else try to do it for us, but
6 the information still has to be collected by
7 us. I have very little confidence that we're
8 going to be able to do. But the county
9 executive says she can.

10 Counsel tells us that the program
11 meets criteria. Even though I don't see how
12 the plan as currently presented actually makes
13 any legitimate accommodation towards an actual
14 demonstration of need related to COVID which
15 the rules clearly state.

16 But I don't want to be the one
17 standing in the way of the handful of
18 residents that will actually receive money
19 that they actually have a need, or any
20 residents, from receiving money. I don't want
21 to be the person that stands in the way of
22 doing that because even though it's too little
23 too late, it's at least something that's
24 finally being done to try and help residents
25 in some small way overcome the giant Dumpster

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2 fire that the last 18 months have been for all
3 of us.

4 I will be voting yes, but I have
5 serious concerns, and I hope Deputy County
6 Executive Helena Williams and County Executive
7 Curran are ready to fulfill the promises that
8 they've made today. I wish them luck.

9 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Legislator
10 Walker.

11 LEGISLATOR WALKER: Yes. First,
12 I'd like to thank Mr. Denion and Mr. Sallie
13 for all the information you've given us and
14 I'm sure Mr. Sallie you much prefer when I was
15 calling you about planning commission
16 questions. It was much easier and much
17 quicker. But again, thank you very, very,
18 much.

19 I'm not going to reiterate what was
20 already said. I do see pros and I also see
21 some of the cons in what we're going to do.
22 But for those that it's going to help I'm sure
23 anybody's happy to get the check in the mail
24 and they'll put it to good use.

25 I do have a big concern for those

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2 who might not qualify at all or who will not
3 qualify at all and some of those people are
4 really our residents that need it very badly.

5 I also just want to also reiterate
6 what Legislator Ford said. I understand that
7 the cut off is 2026. But we are in October of
8 2021. I would hope as we look at this that
9 perhaps we give a cut off earlier. I know
10 that's when the program itself ends but
11 perhaps we give a year and a half, two years
12 for people to apply if you're going to do that
13 and then utilize that money to where it could
14 be needed tremendously throughout this
15 county. Whether it's still to businesses.
16 Whatever is determined.

17 But to wait until 2026 is a long
18 time to have money that could be laying around
19 and could be put to good use by many either
20 residents or businesses or whatever is decided
21 that it's used for. I would like us to look
22 at doing something like. And I will be
23 supporting it. Thank you.

24 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Legislator
25 Birnbaum.

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2 LEGISLATOR BIRNBAUM: I too want
3 to thank both of you, Mr. Sallie and
4 Mr. Denion for your thorough answers to a lot
5 of the questions that have been raised over
6 the last couple of sessions.

7 We know that this is a household
8 assistance program, that's what it's called,
9 so what better way to help households. We're
10 helping homeowners, we're helping legal
11 renters and people who have been hurt by
12 COVID. They do have to provide information
13 but that's the very reason why we're doing
14 this because we want to help people and they
15 have to prove they were hurt by COVID.

16 So, by them giving the information
17 that KPMG will be able to secure and have the
18 access to, it's not going to be information
19 disseminated throughout the county, it will be
20 in this portal, I feel that you have put a lot
21 of mechanisms in place in order to provide the
22 security we need and this program should be
23 operated efficiently and the idea is to get
24 the money out.

25 So, we know right away 42,000

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2 households will be able to receive these
3 checks in short order and they need it. So we
4 will be assisting households. This is a
5 household assistance program. So I'm very
6 proud as a Nassau County legislator to be able
7 to be here and to be able to say yes, let's
8 help people in our county. Thank you.

9 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Anyone
10 else? Hearing none, I'm going to call for a
11 vote. All in favor signify by saying aye.
12 Those opposed? Passes by a vote of 18 to
13 one.

14 Motion to adjourn? Moved by
15 Legislator Walker. Seconded by Minority
16 Leader Abrahams. All in favor of adjourning
17 signify by saying aye. Those opposed? We are
18 adjourned.

19 (Meeting adjourned at 3:57 p.m.)

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CERTIFICATION

I, FRANK GRAY, a Notary
Public in and for the State of New
York, do hereby certify:

THAT the foregoing is a true and
accurate transcript of my stenographic
notes.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have
hereunto set my hand this 11th day of
October 2021.

FRANK GRAY